



Published on *MTS Intranet* (<https://mtsnet.demosite.us>)

[Home](#) > As Hundreds of Thousands Flock to December Nights, MTS Offering Free Bus Rides to Balboa Park

---

Wednesday, December 4, 2024

**San Diego – December Nights**, San Diego’s biggest holiday celebration, is back to kick off the holiday season Dec. 6 and 7, drawing more than 300,000 attendees to Balboa Park. Big crowds mean heavy traffic, that’s why the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) encourages festivalgoers to use its free special event shuttle from City College to Balboa Park.

Each year, traffic congestion around Balboa Park causes significant delays, preventing festivalgoers from fully enjoying the annual festivities. To improve access and convenience, MTS will offer a free special event service to transport festivalgoers between City College Transit Center and Balboa Park during December Nights. The special shuttle service will use the southbound bus priority lane on Park Boulevard, servicing all southbound stops between Zoo Drive and Broadway, for a quicker ride.

### **Transit Service to December Nights:**

From UC San Diego Blue Line or Orange Line:

- For access to the east side of Balboa Park: take the UC San Diego Blue Line or Orange Line to City College. Transfer to the free special event shuttle located on 11th Street.
  - When leaving Balboa Park to head southbound back to City College, catch the special event shuttle at any southbound side bus stop (west side of Park Boulevard).
- For access to the west side of Balboa Park: Take the UC San Diego Blue Line or Orange Line to Fifth Avenue Trolley Station. Transfer to northbound Route 3 or 120 at Fifth Avenue & C Street.
  - Return service to the Trolley on southbound Route 3 or 120 is available at Fourth and Laurel Street until approximately 11:45 p.m. Friday and Saturday.
  - **Please note:** free rides are only available on the special event shuttle service. Route 3 and Route 120 will require payment. Riders can tap or scan their credit card directly on the validator for easy payments.
- **UC San Diego Blue Line Alert:** Southbound trains, between 12th & Imperial and San Ysidro, will operate on a modified schedule after 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights. For detailed service information, visit: [sdmts.com/inside-mts/events/december-nights-balboa-park](https://sdmts.com/inside-mts/events/december-nights-balboa-park).

From Green Line:

- Take the Green Line to Fashion Valley Transit Center, and transfer to the southbound

Route 120, debarking at Fourth and Laurel Streets.

- Transfers to and from the UC San Diego Blue Line available at Old Town.

### **Transit Tips to Get to Balboa Park:**

1. Plan to arrive early and take extra time. Large crowds are expected and traffic congestion will be significant. Use the [MTS Trip Planner](#) to plan your trip ahead of time.
2. Contactless Payment: Now riders can tap or scan a credit card or mobile wallet directly on a payment validator on the Trolley platform or boarding a bus. One-way trips are only \$2.50 and allow unlimited transfers for two hours.
3. Load \$5 onto your PRONTO card using [the PRONTO app](#) prior to arriving at a transit station.
4. Park at one of dozens of [Park and Ride lots](#), most of which are free, to access the Trolley system.

### **Detour Information:**

Due to heavy traffic around Balboa Park during December Nights, MTS is advising regular riders on Route 7 and *Rapid* 215 to plan ahead, travel early and prepare for delays from 3-11 p.m. on Friday, and noon-11 p.m. on Saturday. The bus routes – which normally serve Balboa Park on Park Boulevard – will be detouring around the festivities for the duration of the event via SR 163. All bus stops on Park Boulevard between University Avenue and City College will not be served by Route 7 and *Rapid* 215. (Normal Route 7 and *Rapid* 215 service on Park Boulevard is expected to return around 11 p.m. both days). For alternative service during the event, see the section above for special event shuttle service.

Please visit the [MTS December Nights webpage](#) for more information about detours and how to get to December Nights using transit.

### **About MTS**

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operates 92 bus routes and four Trolley lines in 10 cities and unincorporated areas of San Diego. MTS is a leader in advancing initiatives to create a greener, cleaner and better-connected transit system in San Diego. Each weekday more than 238,000 passenger trips are taken throughout the MTS system taking people to work, school, health appointments and other essential trips. In FY 2024, MTS served more than 75 million riders. For service schedule updates, news, alerts and more information on how you can use public transportation, go to [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

###

### **News Category:**

San Diego

---

**Source URL:** <https://mtsnet.demosite.us/news/hundreds-thousands-flock-december-nights-mts-offering-free-bus-rides-balboa-park>